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News Release

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Corps of Engineers to conduct further investigation at Camp Simms

Baltimore – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, officials announced plans today to conduct a limited investigation at the former Camp Simms site in southeast Washington, DC. This new investigation will be conducted in support of a planned development at the site to ensure the safety of workers and future residents. The Corps is developing safety and work plans on a fast track to minimize impacts to the planned development.

“We could begin the investigation as early as August,” Baltimore District Engineer Col. Charles J. Fiala, Jr., said. “At the latest, we should be able to start in October. On site work will proceed as soon as we secure funding and have approved safety and work plans. We will expedite this work as much as possible to support our partners at the District of Columbia, but we also must ensure that we proceed in a manner that does not jeopardize the safety of workers.”

The former Camp Simms site was used as a small arms target range by the military and local law enforcement organizations until 1959. The Corps conducted an ordnance investigation at the site in 1995. In that investigation, 98 percent of the site was geophysically surveyed, and nearly 200 suspect items were excavated. No ordnance-related items were found. The area has been extensively developed and re-developed over the years, and is littered with construction debris and abandoned utilities.

Although previous work indicated there were no hazards at the site, the Corps conducted a re-evaluation of the site based on a request from D.C. Health that followed Mayor Anthony Williams’ announced plans for a mixed-use commercial and residential development at Camp Simms last May. The re-evaluation did not confirm any hazards, but recommended further investigation to verify the Corps’ previous findings. This field investigation is estimated to take about four months.

“We recognize that the development of this site is important to the people of Washington, D.C., and in particular, to the people of the Camp Simms neighborhood. That is why we are giving it a extremely high priority,” said Fiala. The Corps’ investigation is part of the Defense Environmental Restoration Program for Formerly Used Defense Sites, which is an Army responsibility.

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